1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

Geidam in the north, where another anthropologist, Abraham Rosman, and his wife were working. Discussions with Dr. and Mrs. Rosman helped all of us to see many of the unique features of Kanuri life that stemmed from our particular towns as against more general Kanuri patterns of behavior that were widespread throughout the society. We also became acutely aware of the kinds of variations that could occur across communities as they varied in size, ethnic composition, and quality of the political leadership. At the end of the first field trip, my wife and I spent three months in the capital city of Maiduguri looking at government reports and district notebooks, and acquainting ourselves with many of the special activities that characterize courtly life at the center of the emirate.

In 1964 and again in 1965 I returned to Bornu. On my previous visit the country had been a colonial holding of Great Britain, now it was part of the independent nation of Nigeria. My task in this second visit was to gather statistics on marriage and on divorce rates. But it also gave me a chance to see old friends, and catch up on what had been happening locally since my last visit seven years earlier. Some changes were readily apparent. A large number of deep wells were sunk all over the province, and these now provide enough water for a greatly expanded livestock population. Everywhere the cattle are healthier, fatter, and above all much more in evidence. They block roads and are seen herded in large numbers to and fro wherever one wanders over the countryside. Furthermore the people are less afflicted by parasites because the deep water is uncontaminated, as much of it was not during my first visit. There is now a large modern abattoir and a ground-nut oil refinery in the capital city, and in late 1964 the Nigerian railway finally pushed through to Maiduguri to connect the Bornu capital with Nigeria's national railway system. On the other hand, detailed questions about various traditional practices indicated that there have been few changes at the cultural and social level. At the political level where there were English District Officers and other officials of the regional government, now these posts are filled by Nigerians, generally from other parts of northern Nigeria. However it is for the most part correct to use the present tense in describing Bornu, and when this is not true I will attempt to mention the special circumstances that have brought on the changes.

Magumeri, our home for seventeen months in 1956 and 1957, sits on top of one of the ridges of Bornu, and there is a steep climb onto it from the motor road that travels along the bottom of the ridge for most of the year. During the rains, the road runs along the sandy top of the ridge, to keep clear of the large muddy areas formed at the ridge bottom. Magumeri includes approximately 2000 people about half of whom live in surrounding hamlets within the boundaries of the village area. It is a district capital and thus has a two-room primary school, a court house, and the large compound of the district head who administers twenty-one village areas, containing 50,000 people, living in an area of approximately 850 square miles. The village has a weekly market on Sunday, and is divided up into a number of wards under the village area head who is also the political leader of its surrounding hamlets and officially the political subordinate of the district head. Except for the fact that it has a somewhat lower proportion of non-Kanuri compared to most others, Magumeri is a "typical" Bornu village in terms of its size, occupational ranges of the population, and influences it receives from the capital and the world beyond the emirate. Indeed this is why I chose to spend most of my time

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mans and ruled it after World War I as a League of Nations Trust Territory, (later a U.N. Trust Territory) which meant in practice that it was part of the administrative responsibility of the colonial officials in Northern Nigeria. To appreciate more clearly what changes were brought about by colonialism, however, it is necessary to understand something of the social, economic, and in particular the political structure of Bornu, as it developed during pre-colonial times, and it is to this task that the remainder of the chapter is devoted.

Kanem-Bornu: The Social and Political Background

Only the sketchiest oddments of information are available about the nature of Kanem society. One Arabic record speaks of its capital as a city of tents, and traditions tell of a "Council of Nobles" that had a great deal of power over decision-making by the king, or Mai as he was called. From this and a few other data, such as the emphasis placed on the clan membership of persons mentioned in the early periods of the dynastic lists, we can attempt a reconstruction that fits the facts. The early kingdom seems to have been made up of patrilineal, named clans under senior or noble lineages (also named) whose heads formed the so-called "Council of Nobles" under the king or Mai. The Mai himself was head of the senior lineage of a senior clan considered to be the most important or powerful in the region. In all probability the term "Mai" or "king" was used for all leaders of clans just as it is today among some of the nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples of the Sahara to the north of Lake Chad who are closely related to the Kanuri. It also appears that the great Kanuri king lists are just what local people say they are—lists of the leaders of the Magumi Sefuwa or Sefuwa lineage heads of the Magumi clan. People in the clan considered themselves related by ties of descent to a common ancestor; but they could not describe the exact link with him, while they could describe the genealogical ties through men that made them all Sefuwa. Very probably these people utilized both cattle and domesticated plants although their early city of tents, referred to by Arabic historians, also suggests a greater emphasis on nomadism and the use of cattle. This is consistent with the clan organization described above; indeed this form of organization is widespread among nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples in the Sahara, North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and Arabia. Later, as attested by the ruins at Garamoulé northwest of Lake Chad they probably built more permanent settlements and very likely used slaves from the south of Lake Chad as trade goods and as agricultural laborers.

How centralized and developed the early stages of the Kanem state really were is an intriguing and difficult question and one that can be solved only by extensive historical and archaeological research. Certainly concepts of statecraft from Islamic areas to the north of the desert and trips by Kanem monarchs to Mecca would have acquainted the rulers with the ideas of very highly centralized states. How much this actually affected Bornu is unknown, although it is possible that tensions over the power of the central monarch were another reason for the civil strife which led eventually to the migration of the Sefuwa from Kanem to Bornu.

After the Sefuwa set up their kingdom in Bornu the state became a much more highly organized and centrally controlled political system. The people who

243 ber is expected to last them for an entire year, and the months
221 of April, May and June are generally the hungry months, when the millet supplies begin to diminish.

244 Additional crops of some importance are varieties of beans,
243 okra, rice, melons, squash, tomatoes, cucumbers and onions.
312 These are frequently grown as garden crops, near places where there is a permanent water supply. They can then be watered by hand, or through the use of shadoofs to raise water from rivers to the higher banks.

244 Groundnuts are the primary cash crop of Northern Nigeria, and the Kanuri plant large quantities. Almost all Kanuri families, even those in the larger towns plant a crop of millet; in the villages, almost all plant a second crop of groundnuts
[492] as well. These are bought by agents of the larger trading com-
[439] panies for cash, and eventually are sold to the Nigerian Groundnut Marketing Board through which they are released onto the
433 world market. Millet is the basic subsistence crop of the Ka-
[334] nuri, while groundnuts are the primary source of cash for the Kanuri villager.

433 The Kanuri do not rely exclusively on agriculture. They
233 keep sheep and goats in their villages, which young boys take out beyond the fields to graze in the mornings, returning in the evening. Cows are kept, and fed by the same means, but
433 these are few in numbers. Certain Kanuri sub-groups, the Kwoyam
233 and the Buduwai, depend largely on cattle which they keep in
563

433 great numbers. Buduwai farm and keep large herds of sheep,
233 goats and cows in the brush countryside surrounding their vil-
563 lages. The Kwoyam are a nomadic herding people who keep only
563 cows. Culturally they are very close to the Kanuri; their
233 economy, however, is quite different. They live in a close
relationship with the settled agricultural Kanuri whom they
[437] otherwise resemble greatly. Pastoral Fulani and Shuwa Arabs,
on the other hand, have very little in common with the kanuri
agriculturalists, yet, like the Kwoyam, they live in symbiotic
interdependence with the agricultural Kanuri. The Fulani of
Bornu are semi-nomadic pastoralists who are the most north-
easterly extension of far-flung Fulani culture. The Shuwa
are an Arabic speaking people related to other such peoples
extending eastward to the Sudan. Fulani and Shuwa keep dif-
ferent breeds of cattle and subsist almost entirely on milk
[438] and milk products. They have very similar relations to the
sedentary Kanuri with whom they exchange dairy products for
439 grain and for the goods produced by Kanuri craftsmen. Be-
237 cause of the large numbers of cattle, sheep, and goats found
433 in Bornu Province, hides, sheep skins and goat skins are an
[442] important product for export. These are sold for cash to
Kanuri middlemen and are exported by the trading companies.
[434] They are another important source of revenue for the Kanuri.
ooo Lastly gum arabic, which is the base from which gum drops

[GEIDAM]

491 dam with other towns first skirts the several canteens of the
[366] European trading companies as it enters the town, proceeds
across a wide open area of a mile until it reaches the town
361 proper, and terminates in a parking area. The town itself has
no wall, and no sharp boundary line marks its outer edges. In
three directions, south, east, and north, the town is bounded
by fields of millet, which begin immediately after the outlying
compounds end. To the west of the town lies the river Yobe,
but a strip of land about half a mile in width separates the
[249] river from the edges of the town. In that area are to be found
[134] garden plots, since the land along the river is particularly
[36] fertile, and, closer to the town, stock yards, the slaughtering
[23] area, and the cattle market, with its pens. Northwest of the
town is the tiny adjoining village of Koldi.

361 Southwest of the town, and south of the cattle market, is
648 the Government Reserve Area, a section of land reserved by the
colonial administration in every sizeable town and city where
Europeans are supposed to reside. It is physically set apart
from the African town. In this case, the sole government build-
ing is the Touring Rest house, over a mile from the town, high
on the banks overlooking the Yobe River. Another larger house,
remnant of a time when an army unit was stationed here years
ago, was rebuilt during the course of the year, and occupied
by the Governor-General of Nigeria, Sir James Robertson, during
a brief stay in Geidam. The Government Rest House is occupied
by British administrative officials in their tours of inspection

44 439 276 [597] remote villages which the trucks can not visit directly. The Geidam goroma may also send his own agents, members of his household, to these small villages with kola nuts to sell. These agents sell to still smaller-scale middlemen in the Geidam market-place. The commonest form of retailing of kola nuts is the hawker, the bakama, who walks through the streets with a board on which he has several dozen nuts. Men who sit chatting in the evening shade will buy one or two nuts from the bakama as he passes, divide them into halves and quarters and distribute them among the several loungers. Kola nuts may pass through the hands of five or six middlemen before the Kanuri villager sinks his teeth into them.

44 439 [233] The counterpart to kola nuts in regional trade is cattle. Cattle do not thrive in tropical southern Nigeria, and since large quantities are raised in the north, cattle are the most important item which is sent south. Kola nut importers in Geidam frequently send cattle south in this two-way trade. Occasionally two men act as partners, one remaining in the north from whence he ships cattle and where he receives kola nuts, the other living in some southern city, where he receives the cattle sent by his partner and forwards kola nuts north. One Kanuri goroma in Geidam had a Hausa partner stationed in Enugu, and the two dealt exclusively in cattle and kola nuts in the manner described.

44 439 563 A subsidiary regional trade which has been increasing in importance in the recent years is entirely in the hands of Ibos